

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1976BUENOS06618

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Channel: n/a

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 FBIE-00 AID-05 USSS-00 MCT-01 /064 W
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R 071435Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7460

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (☒) In Full DECLASSIFY

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Grade Declassify on Reason

~~SECRET~~ BUENOS AIRES 6618

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, AR
SUBJECT: ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6504

1. ON 5 OCT., COMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE PROTECTIVE DETAIL OF THE PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA FURNISH THE RSO THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. THE BOMBING WHICH TOOK PLACE ON 2 OCT. AT CAMPO DE MAYO WAS AN EXTREMELY SERIOUS INCIDENT. THE MILITARY IS ATTEMPTING TO PLAY DOWN THE ACT AND AS A RESULT OF EMBARRASSMENT TRYING TO DIRECT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CIVILIAN ARM OF THE GOVT, I.E. MUNICIPAL WORKER. THE REVIEWING STAND UNDER WHICH THE BOMB WAS PLACED WAS ERECTED MORE THAN 24 HOURS BEFORE THE EXPLOSION. SINCE THE BOMB WAS DETONATED BY A MECHANICAL TIMER, IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE IN EXCESS OF 12 HOURS BEFORE THE EXPLOSION. FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE VIDELA OCCUPIED THE STAND, EOD PERSONNEL HAD CONDUCTED A THROUGH EXAM OF THE STAND TO INCLUDE BOTH THE TOP AND UNDERSIDE. NO EVIDENCE OF ANY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WAS DETECTED. THE BOMB, AS OPPOSED TO BEING 4 OZ. OF TNT, WAS A FULL ONE POUND BLOCK. SHOULD THE BOMB HAVE GONE OFF WHILE VIDELA WAS ON THE STAND, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY INJURED AND COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED BY FRAGMENTS. THE BOMB ITSELF WAS NOT A SHAPED CHARGE. IT IS THE OPINION OF THE PROTECTIVE DETAIL THAT THE BOMB WAS

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PLANTED BY A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WHO WALKED IN BACK OF THE STAND AND THREW THE BOMB UNDER THE STAND WHILE THE CEREMONY WAS IN PROGRESS. HE STATED THAT THIS OPINION WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT NO MUNICIPAL OR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE WOULD HAVE BEEN PERMITTED NEAR THE STAND DURING THE TIME VIDELA WAS PRESENT. HE STATED THAT HE BELIEVED THE PURPOSE OF THE ATTACK WAS TO INFORM THE PRESIDENT, AS WELL AS OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GOVT., THAT THE TERRORISTS WERE STILL EXTENSIVELY ACTIVE AND COULD AT THEIR DISCRETION CLAIM THE LIFE OF ANY MEMBER OF THE GOVT.

2. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, AT THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION, THE CHIEF OF THE PROTECTIVE DETAIL TO THE PRESIDENT REQUESTED THE PRESIDENT TO LEAVE CAMPO SINCE HIS SECURITY COULD NOT BE ENSURED. AT THIS TIME VIDELA ADVISED HIS CHIEF OF SECURITY THAT HE COULD NOT LEAVE THE MILITARY STATION REGARDLESS OF THE RISK SINCE IT WOULD EMBARRASS THE MILITARY EXTENSIVELY. SOURCE STATED THAT UP UNTIL 2 OCT., THE DATE OF THE BOMBING, THE FEDERAL POLICE PROTECTIVE DETAIL WAS NOT PERMITTED TO CARRY OUT ITS FUNCTION ON A MILITARY BASE BUT THAT FOLLOWING THE BOMBING THE PRESIDENT HAD ORDERED THAT THE PROTECTIVE DETAIL WOULD BE WITH HIM AT ALL TIMES. SOURCE STATED THAT THIS DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED SINCE IT WAS OBVIOUS THE MILITARY COULD NOT ENSURE THE PRESIDENT'S SECURITY.

3. SOURCE STATED THAT IN HIS OPINION THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE AND THE GOVT. WERE FORTUNATE THAT VIDELA WAS NOT SERIOUSLY INJURED OR KILLED AS A RESULT OF THE BOMBING. SHOULD SUCH HAVE OCCURRED, THE GOVT. WOULD IMMEDIATELY HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER "BY THE HARDLINERS" WHICH WOULD HAVE PRODUCED A MUCH GREATER DEGREE OF STRENGTH BEING APPLIED AGAINST THE TERRORIST MOVEMENT. SOURCE DECLINED TO ELABORATE ON THIS STATEMENT OR TO NAME INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED AS HARDLINERS.

4. FOREGOING PROVIDED FOR DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION.
EMBASSY UNABLE TO EVALUATE RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION.
HILL

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